





AN  
**EXPOSURE**  
 OF THE LATE  
**IRISH MIRACLES;**  
 COMPRISING OBSERVATIONS ON THE  
 NATURE, OBJECT AND EVIDENCE  
 OF  
**CHRISTIAN MIRACLES,**  
 AS OPPOSED TO  
 THE LATE IMPOSTURES,  
 IN A LETTER TO  
**DR. MURRAY,**  
 TITULAR ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

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"Quæve anus tam excors inveniri potest, quæ illa, quæ quondam credebantur portentâ  
 extimescat?" *Cic. De Nat. Deor. lib. 2.*

"They have seen vainly and LYING DIVINATION, saying, The Lord saith; and  
 the Lord hath not sent them, and they have made others to hope that they would confirm  
 the word." *Ezekiel, ch. xiii. v. 6.*

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BY  
 A RATIONAL CHRISTIAN.

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DUBLIN :  
 RICHARD MILLIKEN, GRAFTON-STREET,  
 BOOKSELLER TO HIS MAJESTY,  
 HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF CLARENCE,  
 HIS EXCELLENCY THE MARQUIS WELLESLEY,  
 AND THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN.

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1823.

# EXPOSURE

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TO THE

**REV. DOCTOR MURRAY,**

TITULAR ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

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**T**HERE appears to me something at once so bold and so mischievous in the attempts which you and others of the Catholic priesthood are making on the credulity of the peasantry, whom it has pleased God in his providence to subject to your influence, that I feel it to be the duty of every honest man to expose and defeat those attempts to the utmost of his power. You will readily perceive I allude to your **MIRACLES**. In modern times, Sir, nothing has occurred so disgraceful to the Christian religion as the idle, ignorant and ludicrous claim so rashly, so indiscreetly put forward by you, and your brother bishop of Cloyne, to the power of miracle-working in the Catholic Church, through the intercession of the German Prince. I say to the Christian religion generally; because, though the Protestant churches stand clear of the imputation of sharing in any degree in this contemptible folly, yet as the church of Rome, in point of nu-

merical strength, forms so great a proportion of what is popularly called the Christian church, whatever affects them with disgrace, and enables the philosophic, the deistical, or atheistical infidel to charge upon them, with truth, gross ignorance, and shameful superstition, must and will assuredly, in some degree, disparage and dishonour the Christian name. For what assailant or slanderer of Christianity will have candour enough to distinguish between the respective merits of different sects which constitute the Christian world, and give to each according to its deserts?

Sir, I lament as an Irishman, as well as a Protestant Christian, this recent proof of the state of degradation to which the Irish Catholics are now reduced. I have been hitherto during my whole life a zealous friend to their claim of political and civil equality ; but I honestly and with humiliation confess, that these recent events give me a new view of the state of the Catholic body, and make me doubt *much* whether those who with me have been active friends of the Irish Catholics, on what we believed to be a safe and liberal principle, have not been acting in a dangerous error while contending that there was nothing in their creed, their conduct, or their intellect, which disqualified them for the enjoyment of an equality of rights and privileges with their Protestant countrymen. I have been obliged often, since the folly of you

and your brethren has laid bare the nakedness of the land, to ask myself (and every Irish and British Protestant will ask himself the same question)—can those men be fit for the exercise of rational freedom and political power who are so far sunk in stupidity and ignorance, that even the minds of the highest order amongst them—their primates and bishops—men of such relatively high character for intellect among the Catholics of Ireland as Dr. Murray and Dr. Doyle (of both of whom I acknowledge that, until lately, I did myself entertain a favourable opinion) have felt no shame—have felt unconscious of any burning blush upon their cheek, when they step forward amid the blaze of philosophical and religious light, which now illuminates so great a portion of civilized Europe, to teach their miserable and credulous flocks that the power of miracle-working has again appeared in the world! that it has appeared in the Romish priesthood exclusively—that the Almighty, superseding the laws of the moral and material world, those laws by which he has not only chosen to govern the heavens and the earth, but also so to rule and turn “the hearts of men as seemed best to his godly wisdom,” has substituted for those laws the vicarious prayers of a German priest—at whose capricious intercession, without reference to the chain of things, or the order of Providence, disease is to abandon its victims, and health to assume its place! and all this to prove

to MANKIND, at the end of 1700 years, that the Roman church is the *exclusive* church of the God of Nature!—that this miraculous power, this *late* interposition of the DEITY in proof of a question which reason and revelation had failed to settle among Christians through so many centuries, has, for the PEACE of the WORLD, been lately shewn in two instances,—the one by restoring to a country girl in an obscure farm house in the Queen's county the use of her speech, which had been for some time interrupted,\* and the other, curing a *weakness* in the limbs of a nun at Ranelagh, who had taken cold from lying on damp grass! both of those STUPENDOUS proofs of the Almighty power of God, having been performed in such a manner, that the witnesses to vouch them to mankind, for the benefit of AFTER AGES, are five ignorant women (two of them the patients) three to one miracle and two to the other, all members of that Roman church in whose honour these miracles were wrought, whose united testimony would scarcely establish a controverted five-shilling claim in any petty court in Ireland, and which testimony, so far as it goes to prove any thing miraculous is, either in substance or in terms, confuted by the professional gentlemen who have been entrapped into a connexion with these miraculous tales, and who have been called on to bear witness!

But perhaps, Sir, this tone of observation is a

\* I pass over the crowd of minor miracles which seem to have swarmed since the two first have received the *imprimatur* of the bishops.



little premature.—I admit it,—for it precedes proof. To that proof I am willing to come.—I invite you, Sir, particularly to the discussion, because you have appealed to the public; you have lent the sanction of your name, of your understanding, of your *hitherto* respectable office to the truth of these miracles; because you have endeavoured, as much as in you lay, to induce the belief of them among the Catholics of Ireland, the vast majority of whom, from their poverty, their ignorance, their utter inability to judge upon such subjects, and above all their habits of implicit submission to clerical authority in every thing concerned with religion or spiritual concerns, render them easy, nay *certain* victims to any errors which you and your clerical brethren may think proper to inculcate upon them. This discussion, therefore, you cannot decline, without giving up in the face of the public that question which by you has been brought before the public. But I will not anticipate that you decline it,—I assume that in some authentic shape or other, you will meet the arguments by which I avow it to be my intention to prove that there is no proof that any miracle has been performed,—that the evidence by which you have so unwisely sought to prove that there was, utterly fails, even though every fact stated by your witnesses were true;—that the evidence, however, is in itself too suspicious, inconsistent, and unintelligible to be believed, and that on the view of the whole transaction, your MIRACLES are IMPO-

SITIONS,—and those who have sought to pass them for miraculous upon the world, are themselves IMPOSTORS—either by being originally the passive dupes of their own ignorance or superstition, or by being the active agents of a priest's fraud for the glory of the Church !

In discussing those topics with you, I shall not willingly or unnecessarily use any language inconsistent with the respect with which it is my wish, and has been always my habit to treat Christian Ministers of whatever persuasion.—But it cannot be forgotten that the nature of the subject, such as I have explicitly stated it, will lead to the necessity of using plain and perhaps sometimes strong expressions. It is a case where I am labouring to show fallacy, if not expose deceit ; and this cannot always be done in complimentary or very softened phraseology. Unnecessary severity I shall abstain from.—I shall leave it to the public,—the Catholic as well as Protestant public, to decide what may be the merits of these transactions, and of the parties to them, when the discussion shall be closed ; and in order that the discussion may be the better understood both by the public and ourselves, I propose for consideration the four following propositions :

First.—What is a MIRACLE ?—and taking as true in matter of fact all that has been sworn, can there be, from the nature of the disorders of these women, proof of a miracle deduced from that evidence ?

Secondly.—What is the OBJECT of miracles?—and from the peculiar circumstances of these cases can your miracles be shown to have such a legitimate object?

Thirdly.—What is the nature of the CURES that have actually been performed in these cases?

Fourthly.—On what evidence is a miracle credible?—and is the evidence which has been produced by you to support your miracles, sufficient to establish *any* miraculous interposition.

On the first question, perhaps, before we enquire *what is a miracle*, it may be useful to ascertain what it is *not*. And on this point I think we shall be agreed, that every very extraordinary or unusual, or even unheard of occurrence, is *not* a *miracle*. If we were told that a man with three heads, or twelve feet high, &c. had been seen at a particular time, we should not say such a production was miraculous, but that it was extraordinary or monstrous. If we heard of a tyger twenty feet high and large proportionally, and that he had the tameness and docility of a dog when taken for the first time—that, too, would be called, not a miracle, but a very extraordinary production of nature. If we heard, in addition, that he had the faculty of knowing by the scent the existence of a man at the distance of a league, and would immediately be attracted toward him, neither would this be miraculous; for though the thing had been before never heard of, we cannot say but that there may be animals of

the tiger species of that size, those qualities and that faculty. The existence of such an one does not contravene any known law of nature—and would only excite surprise arising from our previous ignorance of the existence or possibility of the existence of such a being. Again, if we were told, that in a certain newly discovered region there has been found a plant which springs up to the height of, and with the vigour and strength of a full grown oak in the space of one night; this, like the other, would be indeed most extraordinary, but no rational man who understood the use of the word would say it was *miraculous* that that any plant should have such a power of vegetation. So, again, that a particular human creature should have the faculty of distinguishing colours by the touch, metals by the smell, &c. &c. these assertions, though not credible upon any thing short of the highest possible degree of human testimony, yet if it were well proved that such a being existed, or if we saw him perform those extraordinary things, we would not say his existence was miraculous, because we cannot see any thing in such an existence contradictory to any fixed law of nature, however unheard of hitherto such a being may have been. Of course we would not say, on hearing that a girl who had for several years of her life had the full use of language, but had lost it for a time in consequence of disease, which disease however no way destroyed the organs of speech, but inter-

rupted the use of them ; we would not, I say, if we heard that such a girl suddenly recovered the use of her speech, assert that this *must* be *miraculous*, because it is not only not contrary to, but quite consistent with the laws of nature, though perhaps not within our actual experience that such persons should and do recover. The *suddenness* of the recovery would not be miraculous, because we have been accustomed to hear of perfectly sudden recoveries in many cases, where neither medical science nor natural sagacity enables us to account for the event. Neither would it be the more entitled to be ranked as miracle, because the event had been anxiously and particularly prayed for or expected by the girl herself or her friends ; on the contrary, the probability of the event happening in a natural way would be very much indeed strengthened by this hope having been cherished, and by the confident prayer for it having been offered up ; because the prayer and the hope naturally raised the mental excitement—the nervous stimulus to its height, and such excitement as a moral cause is well known to produce in many cases, though not in all, the most powerful effects. For the same reasons we would not call the recovery of Mrs. Stuart from her inability to articulate, which had lasted for a month, nor from the debility of her legs, *even though that recovery were perfect*, a MIRACLE ; for in this, as in the other case, sudden recoveries from disorders like hers, whether connected with the nervous system or not, where no organ had been destroyed, and

where a thousand nameless causes that may elude human sagacity, but yet are calculated to promote or produce the recovery, may exist in the very highest degree, are not contrary to any law of nature, which govern the state of the animal economy. So far as to what a miracle is *not*.

What then *is* a miracle? We must answer this by recurring to the definition of it as given by different writers, professing different and opposite opinions on metaphysical and religious subjects—and if we find they all concur substantially in their definitions of miracles, we may be assured that such a definition is the true one. Now, according to the definition of Dr. Johnson, who was a Christian and a pious one, it is “an effect produced ABOVE natural or human power,”—that is, an effect, which from the universal experience of mankind, no power of nature or of man, that we know of, is equal to produce.

According to another writer—one of a different character in morals, religion, and metaphysics—not a Christian, but a sceptic—I mean Hume (who, though his opinions as to the credibility of miracles may not be quite orthodox, his *definition* at least is unobjectionable,) a miracle is “a violation of the laws of nature;” that is, it is inconsistent with, and in the particular instance, supersedes or abrogates them. The miracle and the laws of nature (or some particular law of nature) are, according to this definition, incapable

of subsisting together in the particular case ; as if a stone should ascend when thrown from the hand, instead of descend, the ascent would be a miracle—would be a violation of the law of gravity, and would, in the supposed instance, supersede or abrogate that law. According to almost all other writers who have touched on this subject, a miracle is defined to be “an event contrary to the established constitution of things, or a sensible deviation from the laws of nature.” Thus you see, that in substance, and almost in terms, all these definitions agree ; and we may be quite certain, therefore, that in them we have a just idea of a miracle, so far as they go and concur. I admit there is one other ingredient which necessarily enters into the composition of a true miracle, and which has not been here mentioned, but shall be hereafter ;—it is unnecessary now to advert to it.

Let us then apply this now ascertained definition of miracle to those which you have introduced and vouched to the world. The strictest attention, and the most severe scrutiny is necessary *here*, for it is *here* that knavery and imposture lay the foundation of their fraud. You, sir, well know, that in every age of the world, the crafty impostors of every false creed have gulled the ignorant and credulous multitude by false MIRACLES. The Greek and Roman historians are full of their *prodigies*. The eastern Bramin, the northern Druid, the Mahomedan impostor, have all sought

to establish their relation to heaven, and the truth of their absurd and impious doctrines, by appealing to the miraculous powers with which they affected, as heaven's favourites, to be invested. I shall not enter into a disgusting detail of those blasphemous frauds, for they would fill volumes. It is sufficient to say, that both the Catholic and Protestant, who have had the education of gentlemen, know the facts, and will agree that *false* miracles have been, in every age and region of the world, the instruments by which hypocrisy and fraud have imposed on ignorance and credulity.—That the miracles of the Polytheist, the Bramin, the Druid, and the Mussulman, firmly believed, and strenuously fought for by their respective followers, were impositions and frauds, neither the sceptic nor the Christian of any creed now doubts; and it is an admission that is readily made on all hands, by all sects of Christians, that those impostures differed from the Gospel miracles in this grand point—that the latter were not only openly performed, without preconcert, contrivance, or confederacy, and therefore were supported by the public testimony of eye-witnesses, impartial at least, and generally indeed adverse, but that they were in their nature quite unequivocal—“inconsistent with, “ and contrary to the usual constitution and course “ of things—a sensible deviation from the laws of “ nature—effects above human or natural power ;” and, which, if performed at all, must, *of necessity*,



have been the immediate result of the power of God, working without the intervention of ordinary second causes. The resurrection of Lazarus by a *word*—the curing of the blind by the formal application of spittle only—the turning water into wine—the quelling of the tempest—the walking on the waves—the feeding of the five thousand, &c. are instances both of the publicity and of the nature of the Gospel miracles, which render any further illustration on that head superfluous. Those miracles being thus clearly inconsistent with, and contrary to those laws of nature, which were universally known to mankind to govern the respective cases, it still became a question with the sceptic, whether *any* weight of human testimony was sufficient to induce or warrant a belief that such miracles had been wrought; because it was much more probable, said they, that any degree of human testimony relating those events should be false, than that a law of nature, known by the common consent of mankind to prevail in such cases universally, should be superseded. But with *that* question, we, as Christian disputants, can have nothing to do; because, as Christians, *we* admit the possibility and credibility of miracles; and the only question between us must be, whether an alleged miracle be genuine, or be supported by sufficient evidence?

It is with respect to the *genuineness* of YOUR miracles that we have to do here; and on this head, I now ask you, applying the definition of a miracle to the statements of *your* witnesses, is it

not quite ludicrous to talk of Mary Lalor's recovery of her suspended power of speech, or of Mrs. Stuart's recovery from the weakness of her limbs, and her headaches, and her lost faculty of distinct articulation—is it not ludicrous, I ask, to talk of *these* as MIRACLES? Both these females have told the public that they and their friends conceived their disorders curable by human means, for they applied to medical aid for the purpose. Had they recovered whilst availing themselves of that medical aid, there would confessedly have been nothing in their cases but what was consistent with, and in the ordinary course of nature. What then of *miraculous* can have been introduced into them by any of the facts they have sworn to, taking those facts as literally and exactly true? for what have they sworn that can vary those cases, but that instead of recovering *whilst* they were receiving medical aid, they recovered *afterwards*? Now, Sir, I desire to know of *you*, whether, in *your* opinion, this circumstance, as to *mere time*, can make *that* a miraculous recovery, which before would have been a natural one? Your answer may enable us to estimate the strength of that understanding which, in the character of a Christian archbishop, has stood forth the champion of miracles in the nineteenth century! Oh! but there is another fact, it may be said, which exists in these cases, and must be taken into the estimate, when we are calculating the

quantity of the *miraculous* in them. The recoveries happened *just when they were prayed for*—precisely—making all due allowance for the difference of *longitude* between Vienna and Ranelagh and Ballinakill; and, *therefore*, these recoveries are the immediate work of God and Prince Hohenlohe. It is very true Sir they happened, it is said, just at the proper moment; and, according to the elaborate pre-arrangement which had been made by the pious contrivers with his Highness the Prince, they were prayed for—and let us for the moment suppose, piously and *honestly* prayed for. But do you, a Roman Catholic prelate, assert or insinuate, that what is prayed for and obtained must be *therefore* miraculous? Consider this proposition a little before you hastily pledge yourself to a miracle. Sir, I am a Protestant, and profess with the Catholic to believe, that the “prayer of a righteous man availeth much;” but I do not believe that every successful prayer is productive of a miracle. When the God of mercy is supplicated by his rational worshippers for their “daily bread,” they do not understand that they are to be fed by manna from heaven, or that the ravens shall feed them, as they did the prophet in the wilderness. They pray only that the great Governor of the world, the Disposer of events, shall mercifully so ORDER those events, that in the course of his GOOD PROVIDENCE they may be made partakers of *his* bounty, who “fillet the hungry with good things,

while the rich he sendeth empty away.” They pray not that the order of nature may be disturbed and perverted for them ; but that consistent with that order, and the fixed laws by which the great Author of Nature uniformly governs the worlds which he has made, they may receive at his hands whatever temporal blessings of health or prosperity his wisdom and goodness may deem it meet to confer upon them ; and they modestly and humbly qualify their supplication to the throne of Eternal Majesty by the pious qualification of—“ yet not our will but *thine* be done !” These observations are calculated to lead one to a vast field of observation—but see, I pray you, titular archbishop, one of the difficulties into which your indiscretion has driven you. You must now contend that these were miracles *because* they were prayed for, and *because* they happened just in the manner they were prayed for. Now I appeal to your learning in divinity, to your piety, to your Christian feeling on this subject—if Prince Hohenlohe prayed to the Almighty peremptorily, and unconditionally for the recovery of this girl and the nun, without an humble reference to the Divine Will, or to the dispositions of his providence, was not the prayer impious ? Has any mortal creature a right to address the Deity with such a peremptory demand ? Would you, or do you, expect your flock to pray after “ this fashion ?” Do you teach your lay flock, or

even your clergy to pray for *miracles*? I know you must deny it, because it would be unchristian and irrational to do so; but if it be unchristian to do so, why do you lead the Roman Catholics of Ireland to believe that the German priest does this? and that he actually *did* pray for these miraculous recoveries of Mary Lalor and Mary Stuart? Is the German Priest Prince subject to a different law from that which is prescribed to other Christians? If you say he prays for miracles for the glory of the Church, and the conversion of stray sheep, I ask is this his constant practice on all these praying days which he announces to the faithful? If so, why have we not clusters of miracles performed in every quarter of the world, where there are faithful to be found to pray with him, and to be operated upon? Must it not be, because his prayers fail in all instances, except perhaps one in ten thousand, and that he succeeds only in such very singular cases as Mary Lalor's at Ballinakyl, and Mary Stuart at Ranelagh! Or are his prayers somewhat like a lottery, where there are but a certain small number of prizes to a vast number of blanks? But if the Prince-priest prays as becomes a pious and humble Christian, not for miracles, but for the blessing of the Almighty on those for whom he prays according to the will of God, and as shall seem best to his infinite wisdom,—why then, Sir, what prevents the recovery of Mary Lalor and

Mary Stuart, though at the intercession of Prince Hohenlohe, from being brought about not by a *miracle*, but by the will of heaven operating in those instances as it does in others by natural means, and second causes? If this be so, the miracles which you have so indiscreetly patronised vanish into air, and the cures of these ladies are no more miraculous than if they had been produced by the vulgar applications of blisters and issues, which Mrs. Stuart had so rationally applied herself to, before she went miracle hunting with your Grace and her Confessor. You see therefore, Sir, that in the end the matter resolves itself into this;—there can be no proof of a miracle in either of these cases, unless it be shewn to the satisfaction of all who have seen, read, or heard of them, that the disorders under which these persons laboured were such, that the cure of them must have been beyond, and above the skill of man and the power of nature; for if either *might* have produced those cures, the miracle must be useless. And you may be pretty well assured that the *guess*, even of a good Catholic, would be, that the cure was performed by human means, or in the ordinary course of nature, not by a miracle, which overturned the laws and course of nature, for Mary Lalor and Mary Stuart. But perhaps you yet contend that these disorders were beyond the ordinary power of nature or art to remove, and that therefore there

have certainly been miracles performed. Well, Sir, you have certainly a right to the most full, fair, and minute investigation as to this point, and you shall have it. I shall go through the *whole* of the evidence which has been produced in support of Mrs. Stuart's miraculous recovery, taking the facts, so far they are consistent and intelligible as true, and shall observe on it as I pass, principally with a view to show that her disorder was not, even on her own shewing, such as must have been above the power of cure by ordinary and natural means. I shall not with the same minuteness travel through the case of Mary Lalor, because much, if not the whole of the reasoning that applies to Mrs. Stuart's case, must apply to hers ;—and because in truth *that* miracle has been got up with so much less of address, and of circumstances, and it is in itself so plainly a thing to be laughed at, that it does not call for nor warrant so lengthened an examination. When I shall have thus given you the full benefit of all your affidavits, and all your testimonials. I shall then leave it to the public, from whose tribunal you cannot shrink,—nay I will leave it to YOUR OWN CONSCIENCE—whether you have not much, very much to atone for to that public, to your country, and to your God, for having been the wilful and ready, I will not say hypocritical and knavish instrument, of giving currency to this most dangerous imposition ! I begin with

the affidavit of the NUNN herself—the happy or unhappy object of this MIRACLE!

After the formal words of her affidavit she says, that in 1819 she was attacked by typhus fever, which continued up to the 10th of March following, on the night of which, and while in a state of convalescence, the Chapel of the Convent having been consumed by accidental fire, she was “so alarmed that she took refuge in an adjoining field, being long after midnight, and from the damp of the grass, as she was informed and believes, she contracted THE DISEASE under which she had been languishing for more than four years.”

Now ? what was “*the disease?*” The lady, even from hearsay and belief, does not think proper to give it a name,—and her physicians are equally cautious,—for both she and they describe it by various symptoms, leaving the disorder itself nameless, as a *non descript*;—and it is most remarkable that the physicians do not describe it by any of the symptoms which she calls the principal ones, so that, Sir, the Church in after times will find some difficulty in recording this miracle, for the edification of the faithful, and in proof of the holy Catholic faith; for it will be necessary, in order to show this a miracle, to name the disorder *she was cured of*. Will your Grace, in a word, please to tell us what that was? But



perhaps you will be better able to answer that question as we go on. She proceeds:—

“That the PRINCIPAL symptoms of her complaint were STAG-NA-TIONS at night.”

May it please your Grace, what is that disorder of which the principal symptoms are STAGNATIONS, which a lady suffers at night? I protest to you I have looked into every nosological, surgical, and medical book in my own library, in which there are many (for being rather an invalid myself I am fond of dabbling in medicine,) and into as many others as I could get access to in the public libraries, and have not been able in any to find a disorder so named. Perhaps there may be some diseases incident to nuns, which may arise from those sedentary and secluded habits with which women who mix in the busy, profane and pleasureable world are not afflicted, and which, therefore, they do not require a miracle to cure them of: *that* your Grace only and those reverend gentlemen who have access to nunneries, can be competent judges. But let us see whether her own account of this disease will give us a clue to its nature; and your Grace must excuse me for again repeating, it is quite necessary we should be precise and exact on this head, because in order to know whether the cure be miraculous, we must precisely know with certainty what the disease cured was. Well, then, she proceeds to detail.

They were “stagnations at night which were repeated FIVE or SIX times, for the space of FOUR hours.”

This must mean, I presume, that the five or six repetitions of the stagnations were *within* the space of four hours ; for if EACH stagnation lasted FOUR hours, there must be at least *twenty* hours in each night in which the nun was affected with these stagnations, which you know, Sir, in our *latitude* and *longitude* could never happen but by a MIRACLE. It follows, therefore, that on an average each *stagnation* must have lasted, we shall say, about three quarters of an hour. The nun therefore must have, every hour of her stagnation-nights, recovered by natural means at least four times from a stagnation. Now your Grace will easily perceive, that if a nun can recover even once from a stagnation, whatever that may be, by natural means, she may at last finally recover from them without any supernatural means, and the *time* of such final recovery cannot make any difference in the case ; and therefore there is not in any of these stagnations any thing that calls for divine interposition ; nothing which makes it necessary to resort to the special intervention of the Almighty for this suffering nun. And, for so much as concerns those STAGNATIONS, which she candidly admits were the *principal* symptoms of her *non-descript* disorder, it must have been a little premature, and a little profane, and more

than a little absurd and unseemly in you, as an Archbishop, to cheapen MIRACLES, (which if properly kept up, have been found to be a very valuable article in the Church) by declaring her recovery from these to be MIRACULOUS ! But again,

These stagnations, she says “ *produced a total suspension of all faculties.*”

The holy nun must be mistaken here, I apprehend; or there must have been miracles performed on her long before that which your Grace honoured with your notice for the glory of the Church ; for a TOTAL suspension of ALL faculties (in the popular and slip-slop sense in which she uses language, must mean all animal functions) for three quarters of an hour, must be inevitable death, and nothing but a miracle continued, or repeated rather on every stagnation, could save her precious life for the glory that was to be revealed in her thereafter ! I have said this holy lady is a little loose and slovenly in the use of language (too loosely perhaps, your Grace may now begin to think, to hang a miracle upon)—another proof of this occurs in the next sentence, for she tells us in the next breath, that this total suspension of all faculties “ sometimes occurred when this deponent was perfectly awake.”

Here again, making all charitable allowance for the lady's laxity of phrase, we have a very curious discovery—namely, that some of those STAGNATIONS must have happened while she was *asleep*; and yet

she describes to us what took place *then*, as if she were broad awake, and makes a solemn affidavit of it to ground a miracle upon ! Now, will your Grace be pleased to say do you believe that a lady in a sound sleep can be conscious of a *stagnation*, whatever it may be ? Your Grace, from your celibacy, cannot know as much of women in their sleep perhaps as we secular gentlemen,—for I presume no holy office calls priest or bishop to watch the beds of sleeping nuns, whatever opportunities their profession may allow them, and therefore I appeal to the lay part of the male sex, whether they ever knew a woman in a sound sleep conscious of a STAGNATION, or of any thing else more intelligible. The fact is, may it please your Grace, that ladies cannot *know* any thing but their dreams while they are actually sleeping, but they make up for that deficiency by being awaked by the *gentlest* touch, and then, in a moment, are quite alive ! What then are we to think ? Was the nun conscious of a *stagnation*, suspending ALL her faculties while she was buried in sleep, which is itself a suspension of all faculty of observation ? Or did she sleep so ingeniously that she kept one faculty awake to enable her to watch over, and afterwards swear to the suspension of ALL the others ? Even if she did so, her evidence is a little too suspicious to prove a miracle ; for she ought in common candor to have mentioned that important qualifica-

tion of the fact, which she so boldly and incredibly swears to! But your Grace has still more to reconcile in this lady's affidavit, in order to induce the CHRISTIAN WORLD to believe she swears to a miracle; for you perceive that some of those *stagnations* "suspending ALL her faculties" took place "while she was AWAKE." What! awake! and all her faculties suspended! Can you understand *that*? But perhaps your grace may think it right to use FAITH and not REASON when reading a nun's affidavit. The passage certainly contains a *mystery*, and I honestly confess one above my comprehension,—for I cannot understand, or even imagine how a human creature can be AWAKE while ALL its faculties are suspended, any more than I can comprehend how a human creature *asleep* can be, while in that state, conscious and observant that there is a suspension of all its faculties. The result is that these STAGNATIONS, the "principal symptoms" of the miraculously cured complaint, cannot form a miracle, for they cannot be understood without one!

In observing upon this part of the holy lady's affidavit, if any thing bordering upon the ludicrous has appeared to escape me, the unfortunate circumstance must surely be attributed, not to *me*, but to the very extraordinary and indeed *comical* evidence which your Grace has thought proper to produce for the glory of the Catholic church, its priests, and its miracles. I have used,

*ipsissima verba*, the very words of the nun herself, and have offered no remark that did not naturally grow out of them. If they necessarily excite a smile or raise a train of ludicrous ideas, the church must attribute it to the folly of its member who used them, or to your Grace's great want of discretion and taste in producing them for so solemn a purpose.

But to proceed—the lady adds :

“ There were very few weeks in the entire period of her illness in which she was free from those attacks.”

Then there were intervals, and of weeks too, in which she *was* free from them ;—it follows, that her recoveries from them must be extremely numerous in the course of a few years ; and yet your Grace wishes us to believe that her ultimate recovery from them must have been above the power of nature, and possible only to the omnipotence of God !

She then falls into another inconsistency, so obvious, that it is wonderful, almost *miraculous*, how it could escape your Grace's observation, or even that of poor HOZEY, the holy lady's waiting-woman. She says :

“ That she had *occasionally* experienced a *temporary* suspension of the faculty of speech.”

Occasionally ! why, when the *stagnations* were on her, has she not sworn that they produced “ a *total suspension* of ALL faculties ?” and has she

not said, that she had her stagnations five or six times in a night, and that there were very few weeks during the more than four years of her illness, in which she had not these attacks? Must not, therefore, these stagnations have produced *always* a suspension of the '*faculty*' of speech,—that is, a suspension from four to six times a night, with the intermission of *very* few weeks, in the course of four years. Or did she mean to include the "*faculty of speech*" among "*ALL the faculties*" which she spoke of? And are we to understand, that to the "suspension of *ALL* her faculties," the "temporary suspension of the faculty of speech," is to be *added*? Indeed! indeed! Dr. Murray, titular Archbishop of Dublin, this is too ridiculous even for the "meridian" of Ireland!

The lady goes on as to this faculty of speech:—She cuts out a little æra from the whole period of her illness, which she has hitherto been speaking of, and she tells us,

"That since the 6th of January, 1823, the loss of speech occurred *whenever* she was raised in bed."

Two questions arise here.—Are we to understand 1st, that *when* the raising of her was effected, the faculty of speech returned? If so, it was a suspension of very short duration indeed; quite momentary—and if it remained when she had been raised and was settled, why state it to

be a loss of speech *whenever* she was raised.—  
 2d, Are we to understand that *this* loss of speech was in addition to those “total suspensions of ALL her faculties,” which were commensurate with her stagnations? or is it more probable, upon the whole, that the former “total suspensions of ALL her faculties” meant ALL BUT ONE—*i. e.* that of *speech*, and that this faculty was only suspended when she was raised in bed? If this be her meaning, see, Dr. Murray, how little to be depended on is the accuracy of this lady, on whom your Grace pins your faith, and advises the Catholic world to do so too! What does your Grace understand upon this part of the evidence? What do you wish us to believe—or is it a matter of perfect indifference to the miracle which construction the ambiguity of this lady induces us to receive? But to the lady again:

“In consequence of which (*i. e.* the loss of “speech when raised in the bed) repeated blistering and bleedings were resorted to in order to “obtain temporary relief.”

Then, during all this time, from the 1st of January 1823, to the 1st of the month of August, the day of her miraculous cure, the lady and her friends must have thought the illness was curable by human means, and did not call for a miracle. Now that seems to be a very rational opinion upon the subject. When did the lady and her confessor and your Grace adopt the opposite and less ra-



tional conclusion, that nothing but miraculous intervention could save her? I presume she and her reverend and holy friends did not give up all hope of human aid until the 31st of July last, the very day before your miracle was performed—for surely, if it were then the opinion of her confessor and you, that Divine aid only could relieve her from those symptoms or the stagnations, and the suspension of her “faculties,” none of you could be guilty of the shabby artifice of calling in the physician, (Dr. M’Namara—see his testimonial) for the purpose of making him an unconscious performer in the preconcerted drama of the miracle;—and yet, Archbishop, what can we say in defence of your fair dealing on this head, when it is avowed that the whole of the proceeding touching “the instantaneous recovery by the supernatural interference of the Divine Power, through the intercession of Prince Hohenlohe,” had been *fixed* for the first day of August, the very next day after Dr. M’Namara was called in to advise with the patient—and that all the “*conditions*” prescribed by the Doctor-Saint-Prince had been fulfilled! Oh, Sir! the heart of an honest man sickens at this trick! But more of this hereafter. The nun proceeds:

“On the 20th day of June last she, this deponent, lost all faculty of speech.”

Then the loss of speech which she laboured under was of no longer standing than 41 days.

Was not this too short a period to lead to despair of human aid or natural means of recovery? Why, Sir! it was but the *beginning* of an illness; it was quite too soon to look for miracle—particularly in an instance when human aid and natural powers had been proving themselves efficient in the temporary and frequent removal of this illness for the three years and an half preceding. But confess honestly, Archbishop, the eclat of Mary Lalor's miracle, in the Queen's county, had excited the emulation of the Ranelagh convent and of your Grace; and as you were quite sure of being able to secure the same German interest that had procured *that* miracle, you could see no reason why the archiepiscopal see and a nunnery should not have a slice of whatever glory was going; and if a little country girl, in the hands of a country priest, could get her speech restored after seven years, what could prevent an holy nun and an Archbishop from procuring for the nunnery and the see a recovery from a six weeks dumbness? If there be degrees of difficulty in working miracles (and it should seem there is, from the stress laid in both cases on the *inveteracy* of the disorder) surely it must be easier to cure a dumbness of six weeks than of seven years! So you reasoned, Dr. Murray! and so you have acted—and you have got your miracle, and believe me, there is no

doubt on the subject that *your's* is quite as good a one as its predecessor!

The lady then proceeds, and swears that this loss of the faculty of speech on the 20th of June 1823, “could not be restored by the most powerful remedies that were applied.” It follows from this, that since the 20th June last, and perhaps during the whole interval from thence to her cure, she was taking these “powerful remedies.” Now as the nun *was* cured in August, I am curious to know how she or your Grace can safely say these remedies did not contribute to her cure? Is there any reason under heaven for this, but that she and you think it more convenient to attribute it to miracle? Why did she resort to these remedies but that she believed they might cure her? And as she *was* cured within five weeks after beginning to use them, why does she deprive them of the honour of the cure, and attribute it to miracle? No doubt, indeed, she was contemplating the miracle as an *au pis aller*—for she must during the whole of *that* time, if not for a considerable period before, have been arranging with the German-Saint and the Confessor, and your Grace, on the “conditions,” and the manner, time and place, when and where the miracle of her cure might be performed; (in case her physic failed!) with the most glory to the Roman Catholic world! Still, however, the question recurs—why must it be the *miracle* that cured her? But if it were the miracle that cured, how much is it to be lamented that neither she, poor woman, nor your Grace, thought of this miraculous power earlier! what a world of

suffering it would have saved her !—How many stagnations ! how many fainting fits—and how many (more grievous than all) fits of involuntary silence ! Surely however this lady's sufferings and her ultimate glorious delivery—I beg pardon for the equivocal expression—*deliverance* I mean, will induce your Grace to be active in looking out for instances of suffering faith, and quickly to *arrange* with the beneficent and holy Doctor Saint Prince upon what “conditions” his interference with the Almighty may be obtained for some early fine day when at one effort, and by one act of faith, ALL the suffering faithful patients in your diocese (your Grace need not travel out of it, you will find there *suffering* enough, and no doubt, after two such miracles *faith* enough), may be delivered to *their* unspeakable comfort and celebrity and to the never dying glory of your Grace and Prince Hohenlohe ! and I pledge myself as a man of honour and a Christian, that if you and the Prince give me and my friends due notice of the day to be “appointed” for this miracle (instead of churlishly keeping the thing to yourselves, until the experiment be tried, and the miracle performed, as you lately did) and shall also give a fair opportunity of inspecting the patients or subjects to be performed upon (stipulating, however, that they shall not, like Mrs. S. take physic constantly in aid of the miracle !) we shall to a man go over to you if the experiment succeeds ;—*but* if on the other hand the Prince should have got out of favour in

the court above—or that from any error in the arrangements the thing should fail, would it be too much to hope, not that *you* would come over to *us*—but that we should hear no more of *this kind* of miracles, and that the poor people of Ireland should be suffered to go on serving God according to Scripture precepts, inculcated upon them by reason, argument, and the great truths of the Christian faith, without having their minds inflamed, inflated, and darkened by these juggling tricks which bring the performers, their country, and the Christian religion which they *profess*, into contempt and disgrace!

The rest of this lady's affidavit calls for but little remark—it states her having been confined to bed from Sept. 1822;—that she could not turn without the aid of two persons;—that she had been repeatedly bled;—that the tendency of blood to the head was so great, that on one occasion the temporal artery (does she know what that is?) burst, though not opened for some months before; that she had been blistered, and that since the 6th of January 1820, she had an issue opened on the top of her head containing *thirty* peas, and after that two others in her neck, and one in the left arm containing *five kidney beans*;—and that she took no remedies but what were ordered by her physician.—Now all this is quite in the course of nature, and the remedies were we must suppose judicious, and such as in the course of nature were

likely to produce good effect ; which indeed she admits they did produce by giving her from time to time temporary relief, there is not therefore a single circumstance in the nature of her disorder, as stated by her, which could lead any sensible man to believe that her cure was “ above” human skill and natural power—the contrary indeed must be inferred ; for human skill and natural power did, from time to time, cause the symptoms to vanish,—and we have seen that within the last six months she had tried “ powerful medicines,” and the day before her recovery had been attended by a physician ;—and on the 17th July, a fortnight before her recovery, had been attended by another ; YET this lady, in consequence of the “ arrangement and appointment” with the German Prince—her priest and her bishop, swears “ that she attributes her instantaneous recovery to the supernatural influence of the Divine Power through the intercession of Prince Hohenlohe ! ! !

The result of all this is, that the whole of the evidence of the miracle, according to her statement, is, her *opinion* that it is miraculous.

Now I am not apprised of the exact degree of your Grace’s credulity ; but if you take the *notion* of a sick lady, that her cure has been miraculous, as PROOF of the miracle, you have much more credulity, or rather I should say, of *faith* in the soundness of a lady’s judgment on a subject she

can know nothing of, than any educated gentleman whom I have ever known ; and if you shall be able to persuade the Irish Catholics to believe as you profess to do, on that head, ‘ faith will certainly abound’ (I mean that kind of faith which laughs at reason) more than it has yet done, even in this credulous country.

I have hitherto been observing on her affidavit, as if her recovery were quite perfect and certain ; and, making that charitable (and I shall show you hereafter, gratuitous) supposition, on what ground is it, I challenge you to say, that you, Titular Archbishop of Dublin, pronounce that recovery a miracle ? Is it because the disorder was beyond human power to cure ? I have proved to you from the mouth of your own witness, and the nature of the facts she states, that it was not. Is it from the *length of time* she laboured under it ? The *first* answer to this is, the time was short, comparatively with that during which others with whom we are all acquainted, have suffered, and who yet recovered by human means—the loss of speech was only five weeks ; but, *secondly*, the length of time that any disorder lasts does not render the cure of it impossible to nature and human skill, unless the originization be destroyed. Is it that human skill or medicine could have no part in her cure because she had taken none ?—This cannot be a reason on which you rely, for, as I have shewn, she admits she took medicines, and “ powerful ones,” even since the 20th of June last—and for ought we

know by any thing in her evidence, or that of any other witness, she may have taken them, up to the *very day of her cure*.—Her bleedings in the arms, and temples, and head, and nose, were also frequent within that time.—*Why may not these have cured her?* But indeed if these be rejected—I would ask why *may not the vis medicatrix naturæ*—that greatest of physicians—without extrinsic aid, in a woman of twenty-nine, have produced a cure? particularly when aided by all the *force of imagination*, all the *momentum of nervous power*, excited in the *highest degree* by the *belief* of an *interposing Deity!* by the nearer and more impressive view of the *machinery* by which a *miracle was to be wrought*—a *Prince* praying for her—the *sacrifice of the mass* offered for her recovery—a *lively and firm faith* at first inculcated upon her, and that faith afterwards kept alive by the countenance of *all her sisterhood*, and by the ardent *exhortations, persuasions* of her confessor and your Grace—nay, perhaps by an intimation that if this miracle failed, it must do so from want of *faith* and *purity* in her, and that therefore her interest, and the interest of the Church, were, in this miracle, inseparately connected!—I have done with the *Nun!*

I proceed to the sister, Anne Stuart.

This lady says, her sister, immediately after the typhus fever, was afflicted with a “Grievous Malady.” This lady, like the other and the physicians, give no *name* to the disorder; and what is very remarkable, she says not a word of the STAG-



NATIONS. She says she had “ frequently, up to August, 1823, been deprived of the *use of her limbs*—(this should have been qualified, if strict truth had been observed, to the use of her lower limbs, according to the testimonials), and this is not an unfrequent consequence of rheumatism, or “ of partial and temporary paralysis, both curable by human means. “ She also had never been free from pain in the head, such as most generally to cause extreme torture.” This is the common headache, arising from a tendency of blood to the head—a disorder which I can say, from melancholy experience, is a very afflicting one, but which I know also, from time to time, yields to human means, and without the least spice of a miracle.—“ That she had been deprived of ALL FACULTIES, so often as six or seven times of a night.” This lady in this instance exceeds her sister’s account of her sufferings—is it that she knew them better, or was more exact in her evidence? and I must remark that the expression of being deprived of ALL FACULTIES, is certainly a figure of speech, an hyperbole, of which, I perceive, all ladies in the descriptive mood are extremely fond; and I strongly conjecture that the lady in using it here means to express nothing more than that extreme languor, listlessness, and disinclination to exert mind or body, which always accompany a violent headache. “ From these attacks, *i. e.* of headache, she never had been free for more than a

week or two ;"—a pretty long intermission, and if frequently repeated might leave little time for suffering. However, she says, "And that was but very seldom ;" *i. e.* the interval of a week or two of remission ; but *any* intermission, as I observed on Miss Stuart's evidence, proves that the disorder, like the headache, yielded to skill and nature. But now we come to a most material fact. "Since January, 1823 she had experienced, a loss of speech, particularly when raised in the bed—that this suspension sometimes continued for a week or more, *during which period very weak articulate sounds alone could be produced.*" So then, Doctor Murray, it appears that even during those intervals of *suspension of speech*, speech was not *quite* suspended, "*very weak articulate sounds alone could be produced !*" But, Doctor, this cuts up a very great portion of the miracle—for know ye that *weak articulate sounds* constitute sometimes the very best speaking—have you never heard the best actor's voice sink into a whisper when delivering in his best manner one of the most beautiful and pathetic passages ? In fact, this poor woman only suffered a suspension of *loud* speaking, and, while in pain, very judiciously did not strain her voice, but preferred "*weak articulate sounds*" to strong boisterous ones. Really, this is a very candid admission, and I cannot help saying I honour the lady for letting so much of the truth out. This evidence however

relates only to the period of her illness up to the 27th June, 1823 ; for “deponent saith the patient on that day *lost all power of speech*,” and that “this privation continued up to the 1st of August, 1823.” Thus, then the suspension of speech turns out to have been only for a period of 33 days. She then states the issues, that the peas were enveloped in blistering ointment, and that tartaric antimonial ointment was ordered to produce vesication—all these, no doubt, very rational means to produce recovery. She states also, that from the 6th of January, 1823 to the 1st of August, 1823 the patient was not able to turn in bed without the assistance of two persons, but she is silent as to the medicine ordered, if any were ordered between January 1823 and August ; as she is also as to the physicians having visited within that period. On the whole, therefore, of this lady’s evidence as to the disorder, there is less room for a *miracle* than before, for the result of her account of the disorder is, that from *time to time* she was deprived of the use of her limbs—*therefore* from time to time she recovered ; that she had a constant head ach, which is a very curable disorder ; that she had sometimes at night been frequently deprived of her faculties—she does not tell us what she means by this word *faculty* ; that she was sometimes relieved from those sufferings, even for a week or two together ; that

in these intervals of suffering she spoke in a weak but articulate voice, and that it was only from the 27th of June 1823 that her power of speech was altogether suspended; that she tried human means of cure, and consulted among others two physicians, (whom it is not thought proper to produce,) and that she was unable to turn in the bed without aid. Again, I ask you, Titular Archbishop of Dublin, what is there in the removal of such complaints as these that necessarily required divine interposition? and again I assert, that there is neither learning, piety, nor reason in attributing that cure necessarily to the miraculous interposition of the Lord of Nature. If I be wrong in this, I challenge confutation!

Next, in order to support the miracle, comes poor Catty Hosey, the servant and the markswoman. I observe on this woman's affidavit, that not only it must have been written for her, but that it carries in it intrinsic evidence of having been *dictated* for her as well as written—the language throughout is clearly *not* her's and has undergone the polish and modelling of the writer. Poor Catty, however, like the two nuns, speaks of the illness, as a "*grievous* illness," but, like her betters, gives it no name; but she saw her mistress frequently "*deprived of ALL her faculties.*" What idea, Doctor, did Catty wish to convey by "*faculties?*" Do you think she had any? and then Catty follows the affidavit of her mistress,

even to the bursting of the *temporal artery* ! the exact position of which in the human frame no doubt Catty knew perfectly well !

Follows the affidavit of the Rev. John Meagher, which, every thing considered, is a very modest, blameless and harmless affidavit. He was her professional (clerical) attendant during her *late* illness. He found her in a state of extreme debilitation (debility) and helplessness—he administered the viaticum to her “ considering” her disorder incurable—and to many thousands, no doubt, had he done so before, who nevertheless recovered without a miracle. He saw her weekly between the 28th of June last, and August, and was in that time obliged to *hear* her confession by *signs*. This appears a little of a blunder, but perhaps it is not so ; for Locke tells us, that *words* are the *signs* of ideas, and possibly he might have *heard* her ideas through these *signs*—those *weak articulate sounds* which she resorted to in former periods of her illness, when “ all her faculties were suspended.” He then says, “ and she continued in that state.” What state ? He mentioned none before, but that he heard her confession by signs. But infer what state you please from his description, and I defy the ablest and most ingenious Jesuit to collect from it that her state was one from which she could recover only by a *miracle*.

Thus far then, as to your witnesses of this mi-

racle, Titular Archbishop ; and I here close my observations on these so far they as regard the *nature of the disease*, which you declare was miraculously cured. One observation however I cannot help making, that, though the patient herself set the example of giving her OPINION that the cure was miraculous, neither her sister Ann, nor poor Catty Hosey, nor the Rev. Mr. Meagher, ever venture so far as to follow her or to give any opinion of this being a miraculous intervention. Your Grace and the nun are the only persons bold or unwise enough to do so. One of your own testifying physicians, Dr. Cheyne, has given an express opinion against the nun and your Grace, in his letter to Dr. Daly ; and the facts stated by the other two physicians contradict you in substance by the facts they state, and the facts they do *not* state, because they did *not* exist. Was there ever an unfortunate miracle, since the days of Moses so left in the lurch ! Why, Archbishop, the legerdemain performer, Charles, would have got through a miracle infinitely better, though he certainly would not have *written* so plausible an account of it. That must be some comfort to you at least.

But now let us see what the “testimonials” say :—Dr. Mills seems to be the senior physician, and may be called her attending physician. He paid numerous visits to Mrs. Stuart within the last three years ; her complaint was generally of an apoplectic *tendency*.—This must mean that there

was a morbid or excessive tendency of blood to the head, which we have seen produced her head aches.

“ The attacks were frequent, and sometimes were followed by paralyssis of the *lower* extremities, and sometimes of the upper.”

“ The sight was occasionally impaired,”

So it is frequently in bilious complaints,—

So it is always in very violent head aches.

“ Blindness *once* occurred, and continued for *several hours* ;

“ The voice often became *faint*,

“ And within the last two years, the power of articulation was often lost *for many hours*, or *for two or more days*.”

All the above are very serious symptoms—but the question is, Titular Archbishop, were they such as to leave recovery by human aid or the force of nature, *hopeless*? and *must* a recovery in such circumstances be miraculous?—recollect always that *that* is the proposition which you are to maintain, and which I am disproving. Now please your pious Grace to see what this very physician, whom you yourself produce, says upon that head, and how easily and naturally he disposes of these *desperate* symptoms.

“ These symptoms were *repeatedly removed* by the *usually approved medicines*.”

Is not this a death blow to the miraculous cure of these?—Again,

“ Issues were successively established in the crown of the head, in the nape of the neck, and in the left arm. Her digestive organs were FREQUENTLY RESTORED to their healthy actions by the use of appropriate remedies.”

Is not this another mortal wound to the miracle? But perhaps there is some comfort for the faithful in what follows, and I gladly give it.

“ Palpitation and weaknesses were not frequent.”—“ During the last ten months Mrs. Stuart’s gradually declined, and for half a year she was confined to bed, in consequence of WEAKNESS of the lower extremities.”

Observe, Dr. Murray,—weakness—not paralysis—nothing like a permanent destruction or incurable state of the limb or organ.

“ In time the voice became WEAKER than usual, and WHILE SITTING UP in bed and BENDING the HEAD FORWARD, an uneasy sensation was felt in the feet and the stomach, and the power of articulation was lost.—After every effort, the *inability* to speak lasted for one, two, or several hours, perhaps for a day.”

Observe again here that the above passage, which is the only one given by the physician of his own knowledge, states the loss of speech to have occurred only in one particular situation, and to have lasted only for a short time; and remark also this inference, that if she did not lean



forward when sitting up in bed, she would not have lost the power of speech for a moment. He afterwards says, that when he visited in July, he was *told* she had not spoken ; but you are philosopher enough to know, I hope, that this hearsay evidence as second hand, is good for nothing. His *testimonial* can go only to his knowledge. He however adds, that on the 31st of July he saw her, and she then replied to his questions by signs. This is not the proper place, or I should make an observation on the little, or rather no value there is in any thing she did in the way of exhibiting her illness during the month of July and perhaps of June—because *at that time* the miracle was in a progress of manufacture, and she was one of the joint fabricators.

The whole of this gentleman's testimony then is, that he knew her for three years—that she had serious symptoms, which disappeared under the operation of proper medicine—that within the last ten months her health declined, and she became so ill, that when sitting up in bed in a particular posture, she lost the power of speech, but not at any other time ;—and that on the 30th of August, she answered by signs. What is there in this, Dr. Murray, that shews a necessary miracle? What is there that does not repel and disprove the notion that human aid, and the

ordinary power of nature could not cure the Nun? Give us your reasons : and I should be also glad to learn what you would wish us to infer upon the whole from this Doctor's, or any of the Doctor's testimonials?—they are *all* against the miracle.

But we are told that this recovery, and all this swarm of sudden recoveries, have been so extraordinary in their circumstances, that they must be taken to be *miraculous*, unless we can shew *how* they have been or could be produced by natural means. This is what your logicians call, I think, the argument *ab ignorantia*. It is here, Sir, that your miracle-mongers chuckle, and are exalted ; and it is here too that some of the friends of reason and truth have erred. The medical gentlemen, particularly all who have been unwise enough to send forth their little *brochures*, professing to account by natural means for these alleged miraculous recoveries—it is here, I say, they have made a false step, and not only given up the vantage ground upon which truth stood, but have very nearly made themselves ridiculous. Sir, *I* shall not attempt to account for those events which you tell us have happened, or which have really happened. You may possibly recollect, Sir, the comical hoax which is said to have been played off on the Royal Society, by a memoir presented to them some years ago, stating a most extraordinary cure performed on a sailor's broken leg, which had been shivered into several pieces by his fall from the main-top, but

which, instead of its being obliged to undergo amputation, was cured by the ship surgeon in the course of twenty minutes, by the application of a composition of hemp and common wax, made up and applied in a certain manner, and the application of which was most scientifically described for the information of the lovers of surgical science. This anatomical and physiological phenomenon attracted great attention, and many most ingenious and philosophical essays were written by professional men, physicians, surgeons, nay, I believe, by a surgeon general, too—all attempting to explain in a philosophical way, and by natural causes, this very extraordinary cure! Each essayist thought his own essay the best, and a most perfectly satisfactory explanation of the extraordinary cure. But the public was satisfied with none of them, and at length in due course of time, when the hoax had fully succeeded, another memoir gave the true solution, that the leg was a wooden one, which when smashed had been spliced with a wax end!

Warned by this example, Sir, I shall not take upon me to account for the events which you tell us have taken place in the chamber of Mrs. Stuart, or the chapel at Ranelagh. I shall not impertinently enquire into the private history (indeed I cannot if I would)—of the bleedings, the blisters, the issues of the holy nun, nor will I engage in what

might be perhaps a very important question on this subject, namely, whether those same issues of I know not how many score of peas, and of the five kidney beans, might not have been very injudicious modes of healing her complaint—whether they might not, nay must not, have created an irritation which must have counteracted the tendencies of nature toward a cure, and whether the removal of them might not have operated most beneficially toward her recovery by removing that irritation. It is quite obvious that where the parties meditated and arranged a miracle, in which the honour of holy church was concerned, in which their own *feelings* and *interests* were deeply engaged, and in which *now* their reputations for understanding or for honesty are deeply compromised; it is obvious I say, that no enquiry now to be had could enable us to ascertain the exact facts and minute circumstances of either of these cases. With what safety therefore could I, or any man now enter into such enquiry, with a view to disprove these alleged miracles, which I however call palpable frauds practised either on ignorance or superstition, or fabricated by parties who have a dishonest interest in establishing them. But, Sir, I go further;—even if I could with the utmost precision ascertain the facts and circumstances of each case, I would still decline the task of accounting on natural causes for these facts. And

I would do so, because, as I have already suggested, I am not bound to admit every thing to be miraculous, for the production or the happening of which I cannot account on "natural principles." We cannot account *how* a blade of grass grows—*how* light passes through a pellucid body—*how* the *will* enforces its commands upon the muscles—*how* the *nerves* convey intelligence to the brain; in a word, our ignorance is almost commensurate with the whole of the material and metaphysical world; and must I therefore be bound to admit a miracle in favour of your church and priesthood, because I cannot account, *i. e.* demonstrate how a sudden recovery has been produced in a sick man whose interest it is to baffle every inquiry, when it has for its object the exposure of his folly, or the detection of his fraud? What would your Grace answer if I requested you to pay a visit to the legerdemain performance of Mr. Charles, and then to account to me on natural principles for all the diverting wonders he exhibits to you? I am quite sure your Grace is not enough of the sleight-of-hand-man to be able to account, on 'natural principles,' for the great majority of those tricks, and yet, I am equally sure your Grace would laugh at me if I called on you to admit that those were *miracles*, because you could not thus account for them. Why then may not *I* smile at your Grace when

you call on me so admit that Mrs. S.'s recovery is *miraculous*, or to account for it on 'natural principles?'

Again, Sir : you admit, I presume, that there have been false miracles played off by knavery upon credulity—I don't say in the Roman Catholic church, but in support of some of those creeds which we both believe to be impostures. Now are you enabled to account on 'natural principles' for the whole of those alleged miracles? I apprehend you will admit your inability to do so. What answer would you give, then, to the man who would call upon you to admit them to be genuine miracles, because you cannot account for them on 'natural principles?' Whatever answer your Grace gives to that request, I adopt in words and letters, and give it as *my* answer to those who call on me to admit the *miraculous* cures of Miss Lalor and Mrs. Stuart, because I cannot account for them on 'natural principles!'

One word more, Sir, on this particular head of argument, and I quit it. See, I pray you, the absurd consequences that follows from this attempt to establish a miracle on the ignorance or incapacity of the particular individuals you reason with. It is plain that different degrees of information and of talent must exist in those persons. Suppose the most capable and best informed should be able to account for the alleged miraculous event on principles not miraculous, and that the others to

whom you address your argument should not. If *this* be a fair and conclusive mode of reasoning, the event in question must be a *miracle* to some, and *not* a miracle to others.—It is and it is not a miracle at the same time !

But perhaps I have after all done injustice to the arguments by which you support your miracles. Perhaps I have given them a false colouring, or misrepresented them, or put them forward weakly and confusedly. I wish to avoid that imputation, and for that purpose I shall endeavour to state those arguments in that clear and logical form, which cannot but exhibit them in their full and exact force. Let us see *then* what they will amount to. The various arguments which may be collected from your affidavits, your pastoral charge, your pamphlets, and your letters, private and public, in proof of these miracles, will stand thus :—We take Miss Lalor's first.

“ Miss Lalor laboured under a loss of the faculty of speech for six years.”

“ Miss Lalor used medical aid, without effect, for some time.”

“ For some time before the prayers of Prince Hohenlohe, she had used no medical means of cure.”

“ But Miss Lalor, on the            day of            in the morning, suddenly recovered her speech.”

THEREFORE this is a MIRACLE !!

This recovery proves no MIRACLE; it is as palpable a *nonsequitur* as ever made reasoning ridiculous.

But the argument should perhaps have another fact added, by way of premise, namely, the contemporaneous prayers of the Prince, &c.—The argument will then stand thus :

Miss Lalor had lost her speech for six years.

Miss Lalor had used medical aid at first without effect.

Miss L. had, for some time, abstained from medical means of cure.

Prince Hohenlohe prayed for her recovery.

A mass was offered at the same time for her recovery.

Miss Lalor suddenly recovered on the morning of the            day of

THEREFORE a miracle has been performed !

The *nonsequitur*, Sir, still stares you in the face. I must still ask you how do you make this conclusion follow from those premises ? *Might not* Miss Lalor have been recovered by the natural course of God's ordinary providence, *though* Prince Hohenlohe prayed for her, and *though* his prayers may have been favourably heard ? Is it not *possible* she might have recovered by natural means, and that the Prince's prayers had no effect on the will of the Almighty, and did not alter the course of his providence ? Nay, is it not millions of



times more *probable* that she did recover by natural means than by such a *miracle*?

But perhaps I do not still rightly estimate the force of your reasoning, and that it is not so inconclusive as I have supposed. Let us therefore examine yet a little more closely.—I say, then, of this reasoning of your's be not inconsequential, and a *nonsequitur*, it must be because for some one of the following reasons, and which should constitute the *minor* proposition in your syllogism :—

1st.—Because it is *impossible* that a girl could recover from a suspension of the faculty of speech when she had used medicine without effect, except by a miracle.

2d.—Or because it is *impossible* she could recover from such a disorder otherwise than by the use of medical means, or a miracle.

3d.—Or because it is *impossible* that Prince Hohenlohe should have prayed for her recovery, and that she should have recovered without the recovery being miraculous.

Now, Sir, will you be rash enough to tell the public that you really believe any one of those things is *impossible*? I wish you would, Dr. Murray; for if you shall do so, I leave your understanding and your miracles to the contempt which every man of common sense must, in that case, have for both!

But perhaps you will say, there is another fact which should enter into the statement of premises, from which you draw your conclusion ; and that is, that Miss Lalor is a Roman Catholic—Prince Hohenlohe is a Roman Catholic,—THEREFORE, for that reason, combined with the others, the recovery must be miraculous. Sir, I shall not further comment on the reasoning, even after the introduction of the fact.—You must see the inference is ridiculous !

I have here exemplified your reasoning in support of these miracles in the particular case of Mary Lalor, because it is less complicated with facts ; but changing the name, and substituting Mrs. Stuart's symptoms, the *stagnations*, &c. or any, or all her other symptoms together, in place of Miss L.'s loss of speech, and the form and force of the reasoning in her case will be just such as it stands above in the case of Miss Lalor.

So then, Titular Archbishop ! ponder for a while *what is a miracle*. Compare the definition of a genuine miracle with the facts which you have obtruded on the world as miraculous ; in my opinion, to the scandal of the Christian church, and the disgrace of your own understanding ; and either shew this reasoning of mine to be fallacious, or admit, by your silence, that you have lent yourself, through ignorance, or through design, to a

gross and mischievous imposture on your credulous and misled flocks.

With respect now to the *second head* of enquiry.—What is the *object* of miracles? I hope, Sir, there can be no difference between us on the abstract answer to this abstract enquiry—I trust you, an Archbishop, will not so far degrade those special interventions of Almighty power as to assert, that they are exhibited to mankind for any other than the most grave and momentous purposes—that they are a species of *lusus naturæ* produced in the playfulness or sport of Omnipotence, and that we witness them therefore in instances when we cannot understand for what particular purpose they have been produced! For myself, I profess to believe that they are never performed but in “attestation of some TRUTH.” In this I have the sanction of Dr. Johnson’s definition, to which I before referred—but I should not rely on the authority of an individual on such a point as this, however respectable, if I did not find that he only embodies the sentiments of the whole Christian world on this subject; for every Christian writer agrees, it would be at once silly and impious to believe that the Almighty Governor of the Universe supersedes the established laws of the universe he has made—and puts by the ordinary Providence by which he regulates the moral and material world, to shew “signs and wonders” without adequate objects, and

merely, like a juggler, for the amusement of his audience. We may safely assume, and indeed the thing is quite obvious from the illustration of the Gospel miracles, that when the Lord of Nature shews forth his miraculous power, it is to prove to his creatures by this miraculous intervention (which from its unequivocal nature precludes all doubt that the act is HIS) some great truth which it concerns his creatures to know, and which he is graciously pleased to reveal : for instance ; the miracles of Christ had obviously and expressly for their object to prove that Christ was sent from God—and that therefore the doctrines which he taught, and precepts which he inculcated, had the immediate sanction of the Most High ;—they had for their object to disclose the religion of Christ to mankind, and to bring “ life and immortality to light,” to make a *new* disclosure and revelation in which the whole human race were interested, and without which the certainty of a future life, of future rewards and punishments—and the means by which man may become reconciled to his Maker, could not have been *made manifest*. The apostles’ miracles had the same object—the proof and the establishment of the Christian faith, in a world in which it had not yet been generally received or finally established. Now, without entering into the discussion, of whether miracles ceased when the faith

of Christ was once published, universally known and generally received, or whether it be within the counsels of the Almighty, that particular miracles should be wrought in after times for proof of particular truths, it must clearly appear to every rational Christian, that if there be a miracle performed, it must be for some such important object as the Gospel miracles were performed—to effect the making manifest some great truth hitherto unknown, and essential to the eternal interests of his creatures. If so, the particular object, *i. e.* the particular truth which the miracle is wrought to prove, must be not only hitherto unknown, but it must be clear and unambiguous—for if *not*, the miracle is useless, and driftless,—and therefore cannot be a *miracle* but an *imposition*. Now apply this touchstone to the pretended miracles in question.—What is the truth those alleged miracles had in view to disclose or to establish?—What were they to prove?—Was it a peculiar privilege to Prince Hohenlohe, and for *his benefit*, that the Almighty intended when he gave him this alleged power? or was it merely for the benefit or the health of those who might favour him with their custom in incurable cases? The one purpose it would be childish to attribute to the Omnipotence, and as to the others, their cures could have been brought about in the ordinary course of his providence.

Was it to encrease the piety of the good—or

restrain the wicked from his ways? If these were the objects of miraculous interposition, when has there ever been a day in which these causes did not exist, and call for the miraculous interposition of Heaven?—But to this supposition the Saviour has already given a decided answer, when called on in his own parable by *Dives* in torment to send a messenger from the dead miraculously to inform his friends of his state, “they have Moses and the Prophets—let them hear them.” “If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead.” Was it to prove any *particular* doctrines held in your church and not in other Christian churches? If so, *what is that doctrine?* How is it known?—or if it be *not* known, is not the miracle thrown away? Does not the Almighty miss his aim by leaving his intention undeclared to his creatures? Shall we *conjecture* that the object of the miracle was to prove the Doway Vulgate, a better translation of the Scripture than the English Bible? Alas! Sir, this is a question that must depend on human learning in the original languages—a miracle here would be useless! It is to prove the *real* Presence in the sacrifice of the Mass! and that your interpretation of “this is my Body,” in the true and rational interpretation of this controverted text.—Alas, if so, the miracle comes too late after the lapse of so many centuries, within which that question has been agitated, and has vexed the church!—But sup-

posing it not so, how will Doctor Murray, and Doctor Doyle, and the popish priesthood, convince a reasonable man that *this* is really the truth which this miracle is to prove! Is the miracle first to be performed, and must we take your word for the object and construction of it afterwards, as well as for the fact that it was at all performed? No, Doctor, this cannot be;—if the Almighty performs miracles for our instruction, he tells us for what purpose they were performed, and he calls us to believe the *declared* doctrine, because of the *plain* miracle. But perhaps your Grace is of opinion that the Deity intervenes by miracles to declare between two opposite opinions in the bosom of the Catholic church itself, which of them has the approbation of Heaven;—and perhaps you believe—for your Grace appears to abound in faith—that the will of Heaven was declared in favour of *Jansenism* by the miracles performed on the tomb of the Abbe Paris! If you do, the peculiarity of your understanding secures you from any further animadversion or argument from me! If you do not, what is your Grace's opinion as to the truth of those miracles? Are they not false miracles—performed in the bosom of your church, and by which thousands were at the time deceived?—and if so, how can we know but that these miracles may also be gross impositions on the faith or credulity of the Irish flock? “By what signs shall we know them?” How can we be safe in distinguishing the false from the true?

or must we always take the word of the bishop or priest for the time being—both as to the truth of the miracle and the object of it!

But again—perhaps the object of these miracles is, to use the language of your pastoral address, to “create a new link to bind him (the Popish Catholic) more closely to his *divinely attested religion*,”—or “to conduct back the brethren who are wandering from the one fold,” to venerate that HOLY MASS, on which the hand of Omnipotence has impressed, “in such effulgent characters, the attestation of its sanctity.”—All this, Doctor, you modestly preface with a “PERHAPS.”—Now is it not a little singular and a little *suspicious*, that this “*supernatural agency*” those cures “*beyond the reach of human power*,” this “*extraordinary interposition of the Omnipotent Being*,” should have been exhibited by “*the finger of God?*”—and that yet the Almighty should have so far *concealed* the object of them, that even the learning and piety, and, I know not whether I should offend by saying *inspiration* of the first Catholic bishop in this saint-like and favoured isle, can only *guess* through a PERHAPS at what that object is! Really, Sir, I am at a loss to know how we can be improved by these miracles, if even, with you as a commentator, we can only conjecture why they were performed!—Are we called on to believe—not upon your declared opinion, *ex cathedra*, but on your PERHAPS! If you have a fixed belief



yourself as to the object of these miracles, you should teach us—you should not say to the faithful enquirers who ask “what shall I believe in order to  
 “be saved?—PERHAPS you may believe this, and  
 “PERHAPS you may believe that;—but though I  
 “am a Catholic archbishop, I am myself ignorant  
 “what the Almighty intended to offer or to effect  
 “by these miracles;—and we must wait for another  
 “batch of miracles to teach us what the last meant,  
 “or what the Deity intended to inculcate by  
 “them!” To be serious, Sir, do you mean to tell the world that the Almighty interposes his omnipotence in an extraordinary and miraculous way for *no* purpose—or, for what is the same thing, one that is unintelligible, and must be *guessed* at? I should not put this question to you, (which, until I read your pastoral address, I should have conceived it an insult to any Christian Clergyman to propose to him,) but that you have in terms in that address expressly told the world, not only that we do not *know*, but that it is not for us to enquire why or for what object these miracles have been wrought. You expressly say—  
 “what may be the views of God in the recent  
 “prodigies, which are now the admiration of  
 “Europe, and one of which has just occurred  
 “under our own eyes, IT IS NOT FOR US TO DETER-  
 “MINE!” Is it not indeed Sir! Then, with respect to us, are not these miracles useless? an idle display of omnipotent power, calculated only,

to use your own phrase, to excite the ADMIRATION of the beholders! how can we profit by them? what truth do they disclose? what doctrine do they confirm? what do they call upon us to do, or to suffer, or to believe? If nothing, then your miracles are nothing,—your pastoral addresses, your sermons, your arguments upon them are *worse* than nothing, they are ridiculous and childish babble! Indeed, my good Doctor, your pastoral has counteracted the mischief of the pious frauds which it was intended to enforce, and to inculcate, and make productive and efficient! The simplicity with which you have let out the important truth that your miraculous cures, your supernatural agency, your demonstrations of the finger of God, have no intelligible object, proves to the rational part of the Irish public, that the whole mass of these facts are the fruits either of intense ignorance, or odious fraud, and eases us from the task of further exposure! What would have been said to Christ or his disciples or his apostles, if when their miracles were performed they avowed to their auditors, that they knew not for what object the Almighty had performed them;—that they might PERHAPS have in view *this* object, PERHAPS *that* object,—but that at all events “it was not for *them* to determine!” Would these miracles have made converts, think you? would the Christian revelation have been received? or would they not rather have been laughed to

scorn, for performing miracles of which they thus avowed they knew not the object or the purpose! But suffer me, Sir, to follow up these observations with one or two more, before I take leave of what I must say is, from the folly, ignorance, or knavery with which it is marked, a very disgusting one. If you do not *know*, and cannot teach us but with a *perhaps*, and think it is not for us to enquire what may be the views of God in these 'recent prodigies', be pleased to tell me, how you can be assured that they are any ways favourable to the Catholic Church. May they not have in view to show, by the driftlessness of these miracles, that the early miracles on which the Christian system itself rest, are no proofs of the truth of that system, by shewing that clear and incontestable miracles are performed by the Almighty, without any avowed or intelligible object, and that therefore the early miracles, like the recent ones, prove nothing? Instead of supporting the Roman Catholic Church may they not have in view the subversion of the Christian one? See, Sir, in this instance, the impious tendency of the miracles which you are forcing upon the credulity and the consciences of the people of Ireland. Again, Sir; if these be miracles, the object of which is yet unascertained, —when may we expect that the object shall be ascertained, and by whom? Are the Catholic hierarchy and priesthood to watch for a conveni-

ent opportunity, and a fit purpose, when they are to apply and appropriate these unoccupied miracles? Are they to remain as a kind of store miracles, to be applied as emergencies may require? and are your brethern alone to decide finally as to the time and object? If so, I would advise the King's government of this protestant state to be on their guard! Perhaps a crisis may occur, when light will break in on the minds of the Catholic priesthood, and they may teach their flocks that the object of these miracles was to convince the world, that the interest of the holy Church "upon which the omnipotent had impressed in such effulgent characters the attestation of its sanctity," required that that Church of God should be supported by all the faithful against the usurping and heretical Church of Ireland,—that the time was come for *compelling* the stray sheep to come into the "one fold," and that for that purpose the temporal rights of the true Church should be re-assumed, and this holy island purged of the usurpers! Are the miracles, in a word, to wait for their explanation and appropriation until 1825, when Pastorini, another favourite member of the true church, and favoured by the gift of prophecy, declares there will be not a Protestant heretic in the land! Oh! Sir, your folly has opened frightful subjects for discussion—subjects, the discussion of which was not wanted to encrease the discord

and distractions under which we have suffered so much !

Before I close this second head of our enquiry, I must add one or two observations. In your Pastoral Address you have unwittingly given a striking instance of what the object of miracles ought to be. You state, that Tertullian, in his Apologetic, gave the heathen world a challenge. “ whereby he “ pledged himself to shew, that if they would “ bring a demoniac into open court, any Christian “ who should be called upon, would force the “ unclean spirit to proclaim aloud his wickedness.” Now, here was a proffer of a miracle for the intelligible purpose of establishing the truth and divine origin of the Christian faith. Sir, if in these miraculous times *you*, or the whole body of your hierarchy shall give such a challenge to the Protestant, or the unbelieving world, in support of that Church, whose “ sanctity is attested “ in such refulgent characters,” I venture to say that the challenge will be accepted, and instead of confining you to any faithful Catholic whom you shall name, we will give you the whole body of the priesthood, nay—and permit you to import Prince Hohenlohe as “ a coadjutor” to perform the miracle ! This, Sir, would be fair and open dealing—it would be very unlike the performance we have witnessed, when the German, the priest, the nun, and the archbishop, first, try the chance of a miracle upon arrangement and condition, and then publish those results which have a plausible

appearance, but sink in everlasting silence those attempts which are unsuccessful.

But there is another “PERHAPS” of your Grace’s respecting these unappropriated miracles. “PERHAPS” it may be “to awake slumbering piety and animate the faithful throughout HIS church—to fly with more confidence to those holy ALTARS on which the living victim of salvation is working such wonders!” Still the holy church! Why, my good Doctor, if this be your theory you must allow me to say you are introducing more of quackery into these matters than of the science and stile of a regular bred Doctor of Divinity. What! must there be a perpetual recurrence to this strong specific—MIRACLES, to uphold the faith, and keep on the alert the piety of the church! Is the revealed word of God—are the *recorded* miracles, which you tell us have been performed in every past age—is the preaching and exhortation of the bishops and clergy of this holy church, whose sanctity has been attested by omnipotence in such effulgent characters—are these legitimate, and established, and approved means of promoting and supporting and keeping in health, the faith and piety of Catholics, are these insufficient,—and must there be a perpetual succession of miracles for the purpose, which like strong blistering plaisters continually apply an unnatural stimulus to that faith and piety?

According to this doctrine, Dr. Murray, your

church is governed not by the recorded will of God, which the Scriptures exhibit to us, but by a THEOCRACY, a perpetual, immediate, and direct government of God, by miracles performed by the agency of his priesthood, and subject to their explanation and comment. Well ! be it so ; but at least we ought to expect, in *that* case, that if the priesthood are to explain and apply these miracles, they shall be at all times able to do so.—How is it then that an archbishop, like you, can give us only a “ PERHAPS ” in explanation, and no other comment, but that “ it is not for us to determine what may be the views of God in working them, and that his *object* in so doing must remain among the inscrutable secrets of his Providence ? ” — How is it that in the former ages both of the Jewish and of the Christian church the miraculous interposition of the Deity was prefaced by a ‘ THUS SAITH THE LORD ! ’ and then came the prophetic declaration of the will of the Almighty, accredited and supported by the wonders which he wrought ; but in these times the Christian world is to look on in silent ‘ admiration ’ of the wonders which the Deity works, unaccompanied by any manifestation of his will or truth, and of which it is impious to enquire into or determine the use or object ? Sir ! this is impious absurdity ; and the only consolation we can have in contemplating it is, that its folly and incongruity are so manifest, that he who runs may read ! Yes, Sir ! this folly will not

only cure itself, but if there be a mind in your church free and bold enough to exercise its own power of understanding on these subjects, one which has not laid itself prostrate on the earth beneath priestcraft and priest influence, this folly will revolt him, and compel him to “come forth from among” a people in which reason, sound religion and common sense are thus shamefully sacrificed to ignorance, superstition and imposture! In *this* sense these alleged miracles, leading, through the indiscretion and false zeal and incongruous reasoning of your Grace, to discussion and enquiry, and by these, to a detection of the frauds and follies which might in silence have smouldered on without exposure, may be considered as the work of God bringing about in the end, and by unthought of means, his own good and wise purposes!

Yet a word or two more with you, Doctor, before we have done on this topic. —Pray how is it, in your opinion, that these miracles, without object or aim, at least any that we or even you can understand,—how is it that these, supposing them to have been performed to the full extent, and in the manner you profess to believe—how, I say, do you consider that they should be objects of “*admiration*,” or should awake the “*slumbering piety*” (unless in cases where piety was actually in a doze, and reason slumbering with it!) of the faithful? We cannot admire the OBJECT of



them as wise, or be inflamed with gratitude for its beneficence—for you tell us plainly the OBJECT is unknown—we know it not, and “it is not for us to enquire.” Are we then to *admire* and become *pious*, because the Almighty, for purposes only known to himself, supersedes a LAW of nature, the *wisdom*, and the *beneficence*, and the certainty, and wonderful precision of which every creature endowed with sense and reason, contemplates with admiration and delight, and gratitude? Is a miraculous act, proving nothing but the POWER of the actor, more properly or naturally an object of admiration, or rational piety, than the continued and unvaried operation of a fixed rule or law of nature, which proves at once the most consummate wisdom, the highest conceivable degree of benevolence and good will to the creature—an unbounded goodness and mercy “over all the works” of the Creator--and at the same time, an omnipotence of power displayed not merely in a given act, but in continuance commensurate with the existence and duration of creation? In a word, can giving to Mary Lalor her speech, without the intervention of the ordinary laws which govern (or rather which *used* to govern) the animal economy; or restoring to Mary Stuart the strength in her limbs, by an insulated act of mere capricious power—can these miracles, I say, be greater objects of rational admiration or rational piety, than the same results produced in the ordinary and

bountiful providence of the Almighty bringing about those same effects, through the agency of those inconceivably wise and beneficent laws, which ordinarily produce, and continue and restore animal health! I fear, Doctor, you are no anatomist.—If you were, you would be convinced that the “fearful and wonderful” structure of the human frame, and the innumerable and wise contrivances by which its economy is constantly regulated, are themselves incomparably greater and more conclusive proofs of infinite wisdom, power and goodness in the Creator, than a mere miracle can ever be; and that the exertion of a simple act of power, by which the Almighty might restore freedom to the tongue of Miss Lalor, and strength to the limbs of Mrs. Stuart, without reference to the laws which govern organized animal nature, is comparatively nothing when measured with the wisdom and power which produce the same effects, by the operation of natural causes! Believe me, Doctor, “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work,” in a way much more likely to excite “admiration,” and arouse “slumbering piety,” than Miss Lalor’s recovery of her tongue, or Mrs. Stuart’s of her limbs can ever do! Give up, then, Doctor, these spurious and empirical modes of exciting the faith and piety of your people! Teach them to admire God in the majesty of his visible works, and to adore him in the

miracles of his goodness, declared in and proved by his everlasting gospel; and then, trust me, you will teach *them* the shortest and best way to salvation in a future world, while you will be more respectable in THIS!

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We have now spoken of the two FIRST, and certainly the most important divisions of our subject—*What is a miracle?*—and *What is the object of miracles?* An impartial reader may possibly before this time be satisfied, that your Grace's MIRACLES have very few traits of genuineness about them; and he has your Grace's express admission for it, that they have NO OBJECT—or at least that your Grace is NOT APPRISED that they have any. It must be quite unnecessary, therefore, for *that* class of readers to continue this discussion further by enquiry into the two latter heads which I proposed to discuss. However, as your Grace and your hierarchy and your priests have become the avowed partisans of the *miraculous* character of these noted cases, and as I well know the immense numbers who bow the knee to your influence, and will adopt and contend for whatever notions, however absurd, that have the sanction of the priesthood, it may be still useful to say a few words on those other topics, to expose every part of these scandalous transactions, and leave them not a shred to cover their nakedness! Let us then see how far the evidence you have

adduced in support of your miracles prove that a CURE has been effected, taking it for granted, that *if* effected, it would be miraculous. This head of enquiry will take little time, for the evidence connected with it is short and simple.

As to Mary Lalor's miracle then, what is the proof of her cure? By CURE I mean, not an alleviation—not a temporary suspension of the disease complained of, but a thorough and total removal of the disorder and its cause. Now the disease was what you call the “loss” of the faculty of speech. It is plain the real disease was a *suspension* of that faculty; for it is not insinuated that the organ of speech was impaired or destroyed, and that therefore an absolute *loss* of the power of speech had occurred: but if the faculty of speech was suspended only from a nervous affection, or any other cause than an organic one, there must always have been a *power*, a *possibility* in the patient of reassuming the use of that faculty, by the removal or the mitigation of the cause of the suspension; and there must also be a *possibility* of the faculty being again *suspended*, by the relapse or access of the nervous affection, or of whatever may have occasioned the original suspension. Now, what is the *cure* which, even according to your own account of it, is said to have been performed on Mary Lalor as to this disease? It is simply that she has again resumed and recovered the power of speaking; but, from what we have

said, *that* only proves that the nervous affection, or other immediate cause of the suspension, has, for the present, ceased to act, or abated ; an effect which was expected undoubtedly from the medical treatment the friends of the girl had resorted to. But this effect—this resumption of the power of speech for the present, no man can prove to be more than a *remission* of the evil which occasioned the temporary suspension ; and the girl may tomorrow relapse into the same state, and find herself exactly in the same way in which Mrs Stuart is proved to have been from time to time, as the state of her frame, or the operation of her medicines produced the desired effect ; sometimes having—sometimes losing—the power of distinct articulation. She may have a temporary alleviation of the evil for a week, a month, or a year ; but this is not necessarily a *CURE* ; and if not, the character of the miracle which you call a “splendid and divine attestation of the sanctity of your church,” remains ambiguous, problematical, and undecided, and must FOR EVER remain so.

Mrs. Stuart's *CURE* admits of all the same observations, with this difference against Mrs. Stuart's case, that her suspension of the power of speech, was of very short duration—four or five weeks ; and that by the former frequency of those suspensions, and the equally frequent removal of them, it was plain, beyond doubt, that the loss and the recovery of speech with her had become

almost a habit, and that therefore what you are pleased to call a cure, is neither more nor less than another instance added to the former ones of a temporary recovery of speech, which is again to be followed most probably in a week or two by a new suspension of the faculty—and which, if this alternation of loss and recovery shall continue in time to come, as it has done for the four or five years past, may give this woman numberless miracles to boast of on the very same subject—provided she can but procure any thing like a coincidence between the prayers of the German prince and her periodical resumption of the power of articulation ! So much for the recovery of her speech.

As to her recovery from the weakness of her limbs, this is yet of a more doubtful character. Dr. M'Namara proves her recovery by telling us he saw her *sitting*—and your Grace will please to observe, that as to the other medical proof of her miraculous recovery of the use of her limbs, it amounts, by the joint certificates of all the physicians, to this only—that though Madden the apothecary tells us, she *walked*, (we know not with what *little aid*) the lady herself “informs them (*i. e.* confessed) that she had not yet walked in the grounds of the convent, owing to a degree of *weakness* in her limbs.” Why, Doctor Murray, that very weakness is the precise ailment from which you say she was miraculously recovered ! What a pity that the power of Omnipotence meaning to give a sig-

nal and “splendid attestation of the sanctity of the only true church” for the benefit of mankind, and to be a monument to future ages, should have thus done its work by halves! and though it enabled the illustrious subject of its supernatural intervention to crawl down a flight of stairs, yet left her unable to prolong her walk for a few steps into a garden! These, Sir, are your cures! Cures by which the enlightened Protestant Churches of Europe are to be brought home to the ONE FOLD—by which God proves his adoption of the mysteries, doctrines, and ritual of the Romish Church, and at last now, for us on whom the “ends of the world are come,” THUS supersedes all the labours of reason and learning on the doubtful passages of holy writ, by giving his miraculous attestation of its sanctity and truth! Pray, Doctor, inform us, has Mrs. Stuart yet recovered sufficient strength to walk in the grounds of the convent, or has the miracle-working power abandoned its unfinished work with the nun, and gone to give more “effulgent attestations of the sanctity of the church” in the person of the *boot-closer* or the *taylor*, with respect to whom I see the news papers give further attestation of miraculous achievements!

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Come we now to the fourth and last head which we proposed to discuss.

The fourth and last head of our enquiry was, on what evidence is a miracle credible.

This Sir, is a most important head of discussion in a case where the fact sought to be established is of such vital moment, not to one or two, or a few individuals, but to MANKIND. For we have seen that IF a miracle be performed, it must have for its object to establish some momentous truth, essential to the happiness of the human species. In these particular miraculous cases before us, *you* indeed treat them as matter of less serious concern, because you admit they have not yet any avowed and explicit object. However you insinuate now and then, with a PERHAPS, that the object of these miracles may be to give a splendid attestation to the human race, that the Church of Rome is the exclusive Church of Christ,—and that they may therefore *perhaps* have for their object to bring back the stray sheep to the ONE fold; that there may be “one fold, and one shepherd.” Now if I can confine you to this, “*perhaps*” you must admit that in such a view of the case, the evidence which is to produce effects so important in the Christian world, should be, above exception, strong. But the necessity for strong and overbearing evidence in such a case as this, does not arise merely—nor indeed principally—from the importance of the end to be established by the establishment of the miracle;—that necessity also arises and per-



haps chiefly, from the *nature* of the fact sought to be proved. Where you endeavour to persuade mankind that the author of nature has, in a particular instance, set aside any of the fixed laws which ALL mankind have uniformly found by their own experience to prevail with undeviating and universal certainty, it is natural you should expect that mankind, before they believe a proposition so extraordinary, and, to use the word in a popular sense, so *impossible* to be true, would insist on proof strong in proportion to the incredibility of the fact you call upon them to believe. This has been carried so far by some writers, particularly by Hume, that they assert broadly, that no evidence can ever be produced sufficiently strong to induce a reasonable man to believe that a miracle has been performed. I am free to confess, that, in my opinion, Hume, on this point, has been well and satisfactorily answered—and that it has been shewn, miracles may be credible on human testimony. But though he has been answered, yet it remains indisputable, that in order to prove a miraculous suspension of the laws of nature, the very highest possible degree of proof must be given. No mere hearsay of one or two persons—no feeble evidence by a single individual, or by a small number, given in an inconsistent or doubtful, or ambiguous manner—no mere conjecture—no surmise—no ranting declaration of an enthusiast—no made-up tale by persons in-

terested—nothing that savours of plan and secret contrivance—no evidence of the extraordinary fact by ignorant, superstitious, imbecile witnesses—or by witnesses under the influence of partial feelings—passions—or prejudices—no such evidence as this can prove a MIRACLE! The proof must be of many witnesses—of unsuspicious character—of reputation for integrity and understanding above imputation—disinterested, or, interested *against* the miracle they come to prove—unimpeached by any probable charge of private fabrication or management—or confederacy—and the facts alleged to be miraculous, must have been openly and publicly performed, and under circumstances that leave no doubt that, if there were fraud, or imposition intended, it might have been detected. Now, Sir, let the public judge between us, is the evidence to your miracles of *this* kind? Is it not, on the contrary, feeble—suspicious—inconclusive—incredible—nay RIDICULOUS, when regarded with reference to the intensely important fact which it is produced to prove! In the consideration of the evidence of these miracles with respect to the first head of our enquiry, viz.—“What is a miracle?” I assumed the facts stated to be *true*, so far as they were intelligible and uncontradicted by inconsistent statements appearing in the evidence itself. It is now necessary to examine how far they *ought* to be taken as true—what credit is due to them, and how

far they ought to be rejected as improbable or false.

With respect to Mary Lalor, it may be readily admitted, that she had suffered a suspension of the faculty of speech for a considerable time—for six or seven years, if you please. It has been alleged that this arose from a nervous affection; and there is no evidence given to shew that it was *not* a nervous affection, or from what particular cause the illness arose. The evidence simply is, that she had originally the power of speech perfect; that after its suspension she has again got that power. This evidence then surely is not proof of any thing miraculous. On what evidence then do you call on us to believe it so? Is it to be looked for in the fact of her recovery having been prayed for by Prince Hohenlohe? If so, that fact itself is not proved by any thing but loose assertion—unverified—unsworn—unwitnessed. Let me not be here charged with cavilling. As an article of news—as the report of an ordinary fact, I admit the common newspaper reports may be sufficient; but what I contend for is, that in such a case as this, where we are called on to believe the miraculous interposition of God *against* the course of nature—*against* the religion we profess—*against* reason and common sense, which we are called on to surrender—we have a right to see that priests, who are making out a case for the glory of their church and their own aggrandizement, make out

that case clearly in all its parts ; and it is quite manifest, that as part of that case, the previous prayer for a miracle by Prince Hohenlohe is an essential part ; for, if he prayed not for a *miracle*, but for aid of the Almighty, in the ordinary course of his providence, in favour of these women, *there is no miracle !* I make these observations without admitting, that if the praying for her recovery by him were fully established, it would carry the matter one jot nearer to a miracle, as I have already demonstrated it would not, in my observations on the first head.—I make them to shew that the priests have failed ; and, with this view I still ask, even if it were proved that she had been prayed for, what was the particular import of that prayer ? In the Gospel miracles, or in the Jewish ones, the supplication to heaven, where supplication preceded the miracle, was open, and generally in the presence of the parties on whom, or for whose sake the miracle was to be performed, and frequently in the presence of those who were obstinate unbelievers ; and the miracle that was afterwards performed was precisely that which had been previously prayed for. I say, therefore, that of this fact, vital to the miracle in the sense I have mentioned, namely, that the Prince prayed for precisely what afterwards took place, there is not a tittle—not the slightest admissible proof ! The evidence, therefore, in this respect is not *feeble* merely, but an absolute *nullity*. The same

observation applies to the case of your nun. The miracle as to her also is rested upon the intercession of the Prince; and there is no proof of his intercession, either for the fact which did take place, or at all; and, therefore, in a moment the whole miraculous superstructure, built upon that basis, crumbles when touched! But let me charitably concede to you, that, by previous compact between the patients here, their priests, your Grace, and Prince Hohenlohe, it was arranged that the Prince should offer up a prayer, or say a mass at a particular moment for Mary Lalor or Mary Stuart; and that at a corresponding moment prayers here, or masses, were offered for the same purpose. Let us see what follows with respect to the weight of this conceded or proved fact: and first let us consider what was the *motive* and object of this arrangement, and of the conduct of the parties. Was it, merely, that these two females should be cured, without any reference to the glory of the church, or of Prince Hohenlohe, or the edification of mankind, and the making of proselytes? If it were so, then the Prince was acting in no higher character than that of a quack doctor, who undertakes curing by prayers instead of physic; or perhaps he in that case more closely resembles a court minion, who having got into favour, uses his influence in procuring undeserved immunities for his particular friends or flatterers. Indeed, Sir,

this would be putting the German prince in rather a dishonourable if not dishonest situation. Let us therefore suppose that the prince-doctor prays for his patients, and did so for these females, not with any regard to their recovery, or individual interest, but with a view to create a fact which is to be used to prove to the WORLD that the church of which he has been all his life a priest, and in which he possesses dignities and riches, is the true and only church of Christ—that his object, in a word, is the glory of Popery and the success of proselytism. Now, on that supposition, he stands in the situation of one having an interest as well as prejudices, which must necessarily throw some suspicion on him as well as his accomplices. He stands in exactly that situation in which the Bramins, the Druids, the Mahomedans, whom we before adverted to, stood, when they fabricated the false miracles by which they attempted to deceive and actually deceived their *faithful* followers.—The desire of miracle-working in support of the creed which one makes wealth or rank by professing, is one which has always led to imposition and deceit. Why should this famous priest-prince, and the Irish priest, and the nun, and the novice, (for, to be sure, Miss Lalor will take the veil,) be exempted from its influence? They are all interested—all have a common cause—a common object of desire and pursuit in this matter, though the priests, perhaps, the more intense interest in the

establishment of the miracle, for this sets “ their horn on high ;” it procures to their church a respect and credibility which without them it had not (if it *had*, the miracles would be useless to you) it adds to their power of extending the pale of their church, and their influence, and perhaps ultimately of enabling them to subvert the existing Protestant establishment in Ireland, and place you and your brethren, Sir, in possession of those blessed temporalities after which it is natural you should sigh ! The *females* may not indeed directly participate with the Church in these pursuits of aggrandisement—but exclusive of the moral effect of hope, faith and excitements of various kinds, which, however you may attempt to decry them, reason and experience prove to have most powerful effects on the diseases which they have laboured under—they are clearly under the influence of the strongest possible wish that the miracles should be performed (and *quod volumus facile credimus* !) for *they* would derive solid and most valuable advantages from them as members of the triumphant church, and in the countenance and favour which they would enjoy from the hierarchy and priesthood, as well as by avoiding the disgraceful imputation of wanting faith and purity—an imputation which, no doubt, would be made on them if the miracle failed ; Did not then these several motives operating on these three classes of performers in

these extraordinary, may I not say, shameful transactions, unite them in the closest confederacy to make, and give effect to, those “arrangements” and “appointments” on which the German and the Irish priests were to act in concert to *bring about* these miracles? Where can suspicion ever light if it light not here! But again—were these things openly done? Was there none of that secrecy and concealment which marks the dishonest contrivance afraid to see the light? Was there any notice or intimation given to Protestant neighbours, for whose conversion, forsooth, *all* was designed, that this friendly project for their conversion and salvation was in progress? Were even the Catholic neighbourhood generally informed that the miracle was on the anvil? or was the time announced at which the glory of God was to be manifested? Was *any* opportunity in short given by which an impartial or adverse looker on might watch the progress of the miracle and detect fraud, if there were any, or announce its failure if it failed? Nothing of all this: the plan is laid—the arrangement executed privately, —none privy but the priests and the patients, and nothing is heard of it until the whole performance is closed! Tell us, doctor! if the miracle had egregiously and palpably failed, if phantasy or accident, or whatever may have been the cause of the partial improvement in the health of these patients had produced no effect whatever—



would you have had the candour to inform the world that Hohenlohe had prayed, and your priest had offered up the "sacrifice of the Mass" for a miracle, and that no miracle had followed,— "that no fire descended from Heaven to consume the sacrifice on the altar of Baal,"—would you have told this disgraceful, this disparaging and ridiculous fact? You will not venture your character for veracity to say you would!—Why, then, if not, was there not unfair and uncandid dealing here? Were you not by this secret management working "on velvet" for these miracles, with the certainty of profiting by accidental success, and secure against loss of character if you failed? Is this the principle on which the gospel miracles were worked? or rather is this the principle, and this the contrivance by which the priesthood of Rome have procured those miracles in "every age," which furnish in your "effulgent characters" "the attestation of Omnipotence to her "Church's sanctity!" One question more, Doctor, on this head, and I shall leave your conscience and piety to its "slumbering" repose—How many instances have occurred since Prince Hohenlohe began to pray in concert for the faithful sick of Ireland, in which the "prayers of this favoured servant of God" who "smells so sweet in the odour of sanctity" have utterly failed? I should ask in some more precise terms perhaps, in how many THOUSAND

cases has he failed? If he has failed in thousands of experiments then, and has succeeded but in *two*, which, think you, is the more natural inference for reason to draw from those facts—that the two instances were cases of accidental success, arising from natural causes,—or that the “favoured servant of God” in the “odour of sanctity,” has MIRACULOUSLY succeeded in the two, and failed in the thousands? I know well, Doctor, the answer you will give to these questions, “This, like the *object* of the miracles, is not a thing for us to enquire into or determine!” This is a very safe way of answering, Sir, and as effectually shelters imposture as it covers from profane enquiry the “secret things which belong unto the Lord our God!” I must leave it to the enlightened and informed Protestant and Catholic, whether such an answer, in such a case, can be satisfactory! But perhaps, Christian Bishop, if you will not answer a question for the glory of God with respect to what is *past*—you will comply with a reasonable request for the sake of your character, and that of your priesthood—with respect to what is *future*;—I therefore supplicate your Grace, for the benefit of the straying sheep which you would fain bring into the ONE FOLD, let us know hereafter, by some authentic publication, the names of those diseased faithful, for whom the German Prince, in concert with yourself and the pious priesthood, is to intercede with

the Almighty for MIRACULOUS intervention.—Let us know their abodes,—their callings—their disorders. Let us know, too, the particular times at which these appeals to Heaven are to be made.—We shall save you the trouble of publishing the results—for in a matter of such infinite moment to us, as well as to you, we shall watch with panting anxiety the indications of the finger of God, the proofs of Omnipotence moving in obedience to the call of Prince Hohenlohe and the priesthood of the divinely attested church, splendid with “the effulgent characters of its sanctity!” But no, Sir,—you will not do this! without assuming any *miraculous* power of foretelling what will and will not happen, I predict, I PROPHECY, that you will make no such disclosure!—You will not yield to this pressure of request, even from your love of “those other sheep of Christ which are not of your fold;” you will avoid it on something like Falstaff’s pretence,—“Not on compulsion Hal! though reasons were as plenty as blackberries, not one on compulsion, Hal!”

Sir, I now release you—and the reader—if in the present paroxysm of the public mind for miracles, observations like these, *against* miracles, can find a reader.—I retire with the pleasant consciousness of having discharged a duty.—I have devoted time and labour without hope either of emolument or fame: I have done so, without any of the feelings of a polemic—for I am no divine:—without any party-

feeling against you or your flocks—for I have been, and still am a friend to the real interest of my Catholic fellow countrymen.—I hope my time and my labours have not been wasted,—for, I feel convinced I have exposed the imposition by which it has been attempted to abuse the public mind. I now call for the judgment of the public upon you, Titular Archbishop of Dublin, and all those who have lent themselves to this disgraceful proceeding! I expect such a sentence from public opinion upon you and them, as will hereafter deter the Irish clergy from attempting to continue or to revive those cheats! If in addressing you in the course of this letter, I have used language apparently unbecoming the respect which one would wish to observe towards every Christian prelate, I am sorry for it. It was not my design or my wish to offend or disparage you personally, or the sacred office which you fill; but the nature of the discussion rendered plain, and sometimes strong language inevitable. The miracles must have been exposed: and as you and your priesthood have avowed yourselves the patrons and fathers of them, you cannot reasonably complain that you have been addressed and spoken of in those characters.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

A RATIONAL CHRISTIAN.

THE END.



